

REMARKS

Applicant has now most carefully considered all aspects of the above-identified Office Action, including the references relied upon by the Examiner in the course of the action. In consideration of these factors Applicant has carefully amended the claims of this application so that the claims as now presented are deemed fully distinguished over the references and otherwise in proper form for allowance.

It will be seen that of the original four claims Applicant has canceled claims 1, 3 and 4 and modified claim 2 to make it dependant on a new claim 5 which incorporates the subject matter of prior claim 1 but in a totally proper format. More specifically there are now four claims in the applications, claims 2 and 5 of which are system or apparatus claims and claims 6 and 7 of which are method claims. The Examiner has initially rejected the claims of the application (as originally presented) on the basis of the reference to Oshima, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. U.S. 2003/0074265. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and believes that the claims as now presented fully and patentably distinguish that reference.

The essence of the present invention concerns a system and method for operation of a internet connected bulletin board, which are intended for use with a specific type of situation commonly found in such operations. In a simple example of this situation a visitor to the bulletin board could for example be a fan of a movie or sports star, a musician or the like. The fan desires to send a written communication (very often an email through the internet) to the person noted on the bulletin board; perhaps in connection with a performance or the like. The present invention provides that the visitor can only send the email (such as a fan letter) subsequent to his completion of sending a gift to the posted person. By using such system, among other things the number of email fan letters or the like can be sharply reduced since

only after a gift has been provided to the posted person is the fan able to actually send the email or other fan letter. The way this is accomplished is specifically set forth in the revised claims of this application from, which it will be clear that certain sequential operations are involved in the system.

Thus in such system a mail address for the posted person (such as an email address) is stored in a storage unit of the system. A visitor submits an application to the bulletin board for a mail transmission and gift delivery to the posted person. Confirmation means acknowledge to the visitor that the specified posted person is to be the receiver of the gift, and confirms the visitor's consent to payment for the gift. Thereupon payment processing means processes and confirms payment completion for the gift. Only thereupon does the system in response to payment completion notify the visitor of the mail address of the posted person which is stored in the storage unit, thereby allowing the visitor to send the mail to the posted person. This is a very specific operation of this system and careful consideration of the basis for rejection, *i.e.*, the Oshima published application will reveal that it simply does not concern itself with this specific type of operation.

Indeed Oshima is typically concerned (as it discusses at many points) with gift intermediating in the case of events such as bridal showers. It will be evident that this is a basically different situation than the present invention is addressed to. The Oshima reference is not concerned with a situation where a visitor has no knowledge of the address of the recipient and can only obtain that after a gift is dispatched and paid for. To the contrary it will be evident that an invitee to a bridal shower personally knows the potential bride, and the address of same. It is true that there are references in Oshima to a storage means which stores registry of an address for delivery of the item for which the payment has been offered. See for example paragraph 0025. However this is purely for delivery of the gift. There is no

intent or operation in Oshima which forwards such address to the gift giver after the gift is made. There would indeed be no reason for such an operation. The Examiner refers to lines 16 to 18 in the abstract and states in paragraph 4 that Oshima has "a step to notify mail address of the posted person by using the storage unit." Applicant respectfully urges that such feature is not present. There is neither a need nor a disclosure in Oshima of the concept of notifying the gift giver of the recipient's address following the gift and payment by the visitor.

In view of the foregoing it is deemed that the present invention is fully distinguished over Oshima. The reformulation of the claims is deemed to otherwise remove the Examiner's objections based on the formal arrangement, etc. The somewhat awkward form of the original claim 1 in which the preamble at least claims an apparatus or system, has been basically replaced by a new apparatus or system claim 5 with the dependancy of old claim 2 being adjusted. In addition two new claims 6 and 7 are set forth in clear method format, to recite this aspect of the invention.

It is submitted in view of the amendments and the foregoing remarks that all objections to patentability have now been properly overcome, and it is accordingly respectfully requested that favorable reconsideration and an early notice of allowance be provided.

Respectfully submitted,



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